

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable consideration of this application, as presently amended, is respectfully requested.

Claims 8-17 and 35 are pending in this application. Claims 8-10 and 12 are amended and Claims 1-7 and 18-34 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer by the present amendment.

Amendments to the claims find support in the specification as originally filed. Thus, no new matter is added.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1 and 33 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,635,768 to Birch et al. (hereinafter "Birch"); Claims 2-7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Birch in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,753,622 to Oughton Jr.; Claims 8, 18, 19, 20, 22, and 34 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Birch in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,055,163 to Wagner et al. (hereinafter "Wagner"); Claims 25-32 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Birch in view of Wagner and Oughton Jr.; Claim 12 was allowed; and Claims 9-11, 13-17, 21, 23, 24, and 35 were indicated as allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the indication of allowance of Claim 12 and allowability of Claims 9-11, 13-17, 21, 23, 24, and 35. Accordingly, Claim 8 is amended to recite some of the features of allowable Claim 9, and Applicants respectfully submit that amended Claim 8 patentably defines over the cited references in the Office Action.

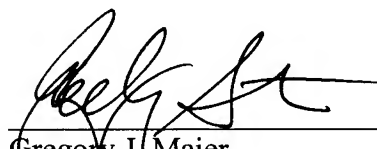
Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that independent Claim 8, and Claims 9-17 depending therefrom, are allowable.

Further, Claim 35 is amended to recite the features of the base Claim 18 and intervening Claim 22. Accordingly, Claim 35 is also believed to be allowable.

Consequently, in light of the above discussion and in view of the present amendment, this application is believed to be in condition for allowance, and an early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gregory J. Maier', is written over a horizontal line.

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